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The Daily Press.

HONGKONG, October 18th, 1899.

In yesterday's issue we reproduced from the *Peking* and *Tientsin Times* an item which must have produced a rather disagreeable effect on the mind of the British reader. The statement was to the effect that the Imperial railway line from Lukow to Peking, some eighty miles in length, constructed by Mr. K. Kinder, was handed over to the Belgian Syndicate on 30th September, and the following morning the foreign staff (by which we understand the British staff) left by the first train. The Peking line is to form a section of the Peking and Hankow Railway. The trunk line was classed in the blue book as one of the projected undertakings that did not promise to prove remunerative but seeing that it is to be constructed, and is in fact being actively proceeded with, we cannot but regret that it is not in the hands and under the control of British concessionaires. The political influence which the control of railways gives cannot be ignored. Not long since a very jubilant article appeared in the *Echo de Chine*, contributed by a traveller (probably a French missionary) on the Peking line, in which the writer told how all the English speaking Chinese employes were abandoning their further study of English and making anxious enquiries as to the best way of getting about acquiring a knowledge of the French language. It may be that the Belgian engineers will find it more to their interest to learn English than to wait until the Chinese railway employes with whom they have to deal have learnt French. English is destined to become more and more the principal language of foreign commercial intercourse, with China, and it will no doubt pass current on the Lui-Han Railway as well as elsewhere, but the fact of the line being under the control of the Belgians, if it does not prevent the spread of the English language and English ideas, will to some extent check it. Then, although it has been denied that the Belgian Syndicate is under French and Basque control, there can be no doubt that it enjoys the active sympathy of France and Russia and cordially reciprocates the same. Sympathy in this case means influence and the influence will not be exerted in favour of British interests. Yet the Lui-Han Railway is the line by which the British sphere of influence in the Yangtze Valley is to be placed in communication with Peking. Ultimately there will no doubt be another line, namely, from Tientsin to Chinkiang, but there are as yet no signs of the latter being commenced, whereas the Lui-Han line is actually under construction. Moreover, the Tientsin-Chinkiang line will not be under exclusively British control, but for a part of its length will be a German line. There is no doubt wisdom in the saying that it is no use crying over spilt milk, but it is impossible to avoid a regret that the Lui-Han line was not secured for Great Britain. The political importance of the line would, we think, have justified a British guarantee if China's own guarantee was deemed insufficient. Unfortunately at the time the

Yangtze Valley as a sphere of British influence had only partially matured and the Lui-Han Railway project was not taken so seriously by the British Government as it ought to have been.

Mr. Pritchard Morgan, M.P., arrived by the N. & S. steamer *Bayern* yesterday and goes on her to-day to Shanghai.

H.D.M.'s cruiser *Valkyrie*, under the command of H.R.H. Prince Waldemar of Denmark, left Copenhagen on the 6th October for the Far East.

We hear that a scheme is being discussed for opening a school for German children in Hongkong. The German community at Shanghai maintains a school of its own.

The U.S. transport *Victoria*, late of the Northern Pacific, is in Hongkong yesterday from Manila in ballast. She is to discharge her Chinese stores and will depart immediately for San Francisco for another load of horses.

Su-ku-kuo formerly Commander-in-Chief of Kwangsi troops arrived here yesterday from Canton by the Chinese cruiser *Kuang-kung*. He is on route to Kowloon to mark out the boundaries for the French Government.

There is to be a special route march of the Hongkong Volunteers on Wednesday. Efforts are being made to have the afternoon observed as a general holiday in order to allow as many of the members of the Corps to attend as possible. The Banks will be closed.

Dr. G. E. Morrison, the Times correspondent, who is now in India, is on his way to Japan to cover the Yatung, but the break in the railway communications with Darjeeling has rather upset his plans. It is understood that Dr. Morrison will shortly proceed to Simla, and thence to England.

The naval news in the *Times* of the 16th September contains the following item:—*The Akebono*, built for the Japanese Government, which recently arrived at Foochow to await convoy to Japan, has joined the battle-cruiser *Shikishima*, sailing yesterday for Pusan. The *Shikishima* and the *Akebono* will be experienced in the general dry weather which was experienced by her way of the voyage the *Emperador* had to make.

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The American barque *Admiral* arrived from New York on the 3rd October to Foochow to await convoy to Japan, but the break in the railway communications with Darjeeling has rather upset his plans. It is understood that Dr. Morrison will shortly proceed to Simla, and thence to England.

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